



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC 12 1997



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Mr. Dominic Manzoli
The North Beverly Environmental Action Committee
775-A Cabot Street
Beverly, MA 01915

Dear Mr. Manzoli:

Thank you for your letter of October 28, 1997, to Administrator Carol M. Browner of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), concerning Wenham Lake Reservoir Aquifer. In your letter, you requested that the EPA examine the situation in the Wenham Lake watershed/aquifer using a scientific approach.

As mentioned in a September 3, 1997, letter to you from Regional Administrator John DeVillars of the EPA New England Region, there have been several studies over the years of hazardous waste sites in the vicinity of the Wenham Lake Reservoir Aquifer. For instance, at various points throughout the 1980s, numerous ground water contamination studies and environmental assessments were conducted by the Massachusetts environmental agency and a variety of consulting firms. I believe you are familiar with these studies and their results.

While EPA will not be undertaking another new study of the watershed for the Wenham Lake Reservoir Aquifer, there are several studies and programs now underway that will provide additional information concerning environmental conditions on the west side of the Lake, as well as information on the susceptibility of the water supply to contamination. First, a new study has been commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) that was described in the letter from the Regional Administrator. Second, the State will conduct a source water assessment for the Wenham Lake Reservoir as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments of 1996.

This new study described in the Regional Administrator's letter will focus on three area hazardous waste sites. This effort should be able to clarify issues of ground water and surface water quality and flow for those areas west of the Lake. A public involvement plan providing specific opportunities for local community input has been developed as part of this study, and I encourage you to continue to take full advantage of these opportunities to participate in the process.

In addition, the SDWA Amendments of 1996 require States to examine their sources of public drinking water through a source water assessment program. The MA DEP will delineate source water protection areas, inventory significant potential sources of contamination in those areas, and determine the susceptibility of a public water system to contamination. MA DEP will perform such an assessment for the Wenham Lake Reservoir water supply. When this assessment is complete, the State will make the results of the assessment available to the public. There are opportunities for public involvement in this program, both in the current development of the State program, as well as with the assessments for individual water supplies. I encourage you to inquire about these participation opportunities by writing to the Water Supply Division of the Department of Environmental Protection, One Winter Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02108.

Also, as part of the State's current source water protection program, MA DEP plans to use funds supplied by EPA to provide technical assistance to communities that are working to protect their drinking water supplies. This technical assistance will commence in early 1998 and will likely be provided to communities for at least three years. You may wish to work with your community to determine specific needs for such assistance and the procedures to apply for it.

I hope this letter addresses your concerns. If you have further questions, please contact MaryJo Moubry Feuerbach of EPA's New England Regional office at (617) 565-4721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Perciasepe". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robert Perciasepe
Assistant Administrator